

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Ross Complex Water Service and Other Upgrades

**Project No.:** P01491

**Project Manager:** George Wespi, TEPF-CSB-2

**Location:** Clarke County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities; B1.32 Traffic flow adjustments

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The under-construction Fleet Services Building (FSB) – a 36,000 square-foot multi-purpose mobile equipment and transportation center in the JD Ross Substation and Regional Operations and Maintenance Facility (the “Ross Complex”) – has been found to require an upgraded water supply for fire suppression purposes. After environmental clearance for the facility (CX July 5, 2018: *Ross Complex Fleet Services and Circulation Upgrades*), the water supply was tested at several hydrants in the vicinity, and flow did not meet the current standards for the new building. The 250-acre Ross Complex is served by municipal water through a high pressure meter at its far eastern end, and a low pressure system through an old ten-inch meter at NE 15th Avenue nearer to the centrally located FSB. The City of Vancouver has a high pressure line that passes along NE Ross Street in the vicinity of the FSB into which BPA is proposing to tie and thus meet specifications by having two high pressure service sources. The new 8-inch service and meter would tie into a 6-inch Ross Complex water loop. The City of Vancouver approved the BPA design, contingent upon BPA adding a double check valve between the city service and the lateral line to the BPA loop. This would require an above-ground valve assembly that would need to be housed in a freeze-protected enclosure on a concrete pad. The enclosure would be approximately 56-inches tall 100-inches long, and would be painted a suitable color and/or screened with appropriate landscaping. After the new 8-inch service has been connected, the low pressure 10-inch meter would be removed and the associated water line capped. Ground disturbed would include maintained lawn and installed landscaping in the area of the meter decommissioning and new meter installation. All trenching would be immediately backfilled upon completion of construction activities, and bare earth immediately seeded, planted, and irrigated for establishment, or prepared for asphalt resurfacing in paved areas.

Two additional items related to the FSB development inadvertently excluded from the earlier compliance effort are: traffic and circulation improvements in the Cold Creek Crossing Approach area, and relocation of the Steel Yard and associated facilities. Cold Creek area utility work would include underground utility replacements and upgrades, and connecting into existing water. Cold Creek circulation and safety improvements would be completed in the vicinity of the Communications and North Ampere Buildings, and would entail installing new curbing, striping, and concrete walks, and restoring landscaping. The Steel Yard had to be reconfigured to allow space for the FSB and related circulation improvements. The existing facilities – the Angle Master and Plate Cutter buildings, and a gas storage pad – had to be demolished and relocated from the north side of the Plant Services Building (PSB) to the west side. The construction elements in progress include: installing the replacement structures for those demolished, and running underground utilities to these; building a retaining wall on a grassy slope along the west side of the PSB; installing approximately 65-feet of new outer security fence on the existing public-facing edge; resurfacing the existing lot with concrete and

asphalt; and furnishing and installing approximately 890 linear feet of heavy-duty single & double-sided material storage racks.

The Cold Creek and Steel Yard efforts would be located just outside of completed or in-progress FSB/Circulation Upgrade elements of the original project scope.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Michael J. O'Connell  
Michael J. O'Connell  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 27, 2019

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

**Proposed Action:** Ross Complex Water Service and Other Upgrades

## Project Site Description

The Ross Complex is a large BPA substation and maintenance operations facility on BPA fee-owned land that is bounded by Vancouver outer-neighborhoods to the north and south, Interstate-5 to the west, and industrial development to the northeast. Cold Creek is a culverted intermittent stream to the north of the project area, and Burnt Bridge Creek – an anadromous stream and critical habitat for coho salmon – runs along the west side of the property.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p><b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b></p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> In assessing compliance with the Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, a BPA archeologist and the BPA historian determined that the work would not have the potential to affect historical resources (pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1)).</p>		
<p><b>2. Geology and Soils</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There would be about 500-square-feet of vegetated ground surface disturbance for the water meter elements of the project. A presumed six-foot maximum excavation depth to reach the existing City line for the new connection would not affect geologic resources in this developed zone. The decommissioning of the old low-pressure meter would entail removal of its vault and filling of the vault cavity, and: excavating, cutting, and capping the water main at the junction with the City line about 900 feet farther south. Disturbance for the low pressure line would be limited to the grass-covered roadside. Generally, there would be minimal loss of soil since the work would take place in a dry time of year, and there would be little time for exposure of excavated soils as noted here:</p> <p><u>Note:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Immediately backfill trenching and holes upon completion of construction activities, immediately seed and plant bare earth, and use irrigation to establish the vegetation.</li> <li>✓ Use local weed-free soil to fill the low pressure meter vault cavity.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Plants removed would consist of common lawn grasses and a few ornamental shrubs or small trees in the facility parking area landscaping.</p> <p><u>Note:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Use weed-free native vegetation species or approved landscape species (lawn grasses that would be consistent with existing cover, non-invasive ornamental shrubs or trees) to establish vegetation on disturbed ground.</li> </ul>		

4. **Wildlife** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: The work locations are in developed areas devoid of high quality habitat and subject to regular disturbance from substation/operations/maintenance activities in the Cold Creek and Steel Yard sites, or from public thoroughfare traffic along NE Ross Street and NE 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the water meter sites. Because of these conditions, it is expected that personnel would not encounter any special-status species in the work areas.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)



Explanation: No water resources would be affected, and there would be no effect on fish. Water used in any construction process on Ross Complex grounds would enter permitted water treatment or management facilities. Water that may be used or lost during the planned water meter work would be of insufficient quantities to transport sediment or contamination to the nearest water body downstream (Burnt Bridge Creek, 0.25 miles away).

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present in the work areas.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The planned work would not have the potential to contaminate groundwater or an aquifer and best management practices would be used to contain an unanticipated spill of hazardous material or a water leak.

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**



Explanation: All work areas are designated utility rights-of-way or electric utility operations and maintenance facilities of the Ross Complex.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The work would introduce a long term change to visuals by installing the large protective housing for the new meter. The effects on the viewshed of the public using NE Ross Street, and the staff stationed at the PSB and the public-facing credit union in the PSB, would be mitigated through coloration and screening choices. All excavation visible to the public would be remediated with plantings that would blend with existing landscaping.

Note:

- ✓ Use a coloration choice on the meter housing to make it non-specular and blend with landscaping, and screen the unit with existing and new landscape plantings to reduce its prominence.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Only temporary, localized impacts to air quality are anticipated where dust or machinery exhaust might be generated. Impacts would be temporary and occur during normal working hours.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Equipment may generate loud noise but impacts would be temporary and occur during normal working hours.

## 12. Human Health and Safety



Explanation: Public health and safety would not be impacted from the work because a traffic control plan would divert the public from the activities. Health and safety of construction personnel would not be adversely impacted as OSHA or BPA safety guidelines would be followed.

Note:

- ✓ Obtain City of Vancouver approval on a traffic control plan as required for the work in public rights-of-way.

### **Evaluation of Other Integral Elements**

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: The work requires permitting from the City of Vancouver. The City has and will offer guidance on controlling traffic patterns and working in transportation and public utility rights-of-way.

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Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Michael J. O'Connell  
Michael J. O'Connell, ECT-4  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: June 27, 2019